



Which future for the prison?

The prison occupies a paradoxical position in contemporary democracies. The growth of prison populations in many parts of the globe suggests that incarceration has been utterly successful in presenting itself as a desirable response to crime. However, at the same time the prison has become object of intense debate and critique. Its capacity to reform, rehabilitate or even incapacitate offenders has been deeply questioned and it has been depicted as an expensive and damaging way of responding to crime. Recent reports from eminent institutions such as the British Academy (*A Presumption Against Imprisonment: Social Order and Social Values*, 2014) and the American National Academy of Sciences (*The Growth of Incarceration in the United States: Exploring Causes and Consequences*, 2014) openly question the rise of the prison and invite us to rethink its place in penal policy. In March 2015 the Belgian Minister of Justice joined this critique when he disclosed his reform plans and announced that he aims to reduce the prison population significantly in the upcoming years.

What, then, is the future of the prison and what place should it occupy? In this colloquium two experts will share their views on such questions. **Tapio Lappi-Seppälä (University of Helsinki)** is a leading expert in comparative penology. He was the 2015 winner of the American Society of Criminology's Sellin-Glueck Award and has published widely on punishment in the Nordic countries as well as on trends in imprisonment from a comparative perspective. **Tom Vander Beken (Ghent University)** is the author of *Howardreizen* (Maklu, 2015) and *The Role of Prison in Europe: Travelling in the Footsteps of John Howard* (Palgrave, 2016). In these books he reflects on his visits to prisons in England, Norway, the Netherlands, France, Italy and Azerbaijan.



Programme

- 14.00h Which future for the prison? Introduction to the colloquium**
Tom Daems, Associate Professor of Criminology, Leuven Institute of Criminology, KU Leuven
- 14.15h Imprisonment as a last resort? Evaluating current policies and pondering possible courses of action**
Tapio Lappi-Seppälä, Director of the Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy, University of Helsinki
- 15.00h The futures of prison in Europe. Prison tourist scenarios**
Tom Vander Beken, Professor of Criminology and Criminal Law, Institute for International Research on Criminal Policy, Ghent University
- 15.45h Questions and remarks**

Practical information

Participation is free of charge but please register before 22 April 2016 at elke.roevens@law.kuleuven.be. The colloquium will take place in auditorium DV3 01.19, Nieuwe Valk, Faculty of Law, Tiensestraat 41, Leuven.

Organisation

Leuven Institute of Criminology (LINC), [research line 'Punishment and control'](#).

This colloquium takes place within the framework of 'Wetenschap en Ethiek', an initiative coordinated by the [Overlegcentrum voor Ethiek](#).